



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## PROPOSED REVISION OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERION FOR GULF CHARTER VESSEL/HEADBOAT MORATORIUM PERMIT

NOAA Fisheries announces the publication of a proposed rule to revise, consistent with the intent of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, one of the eligibility criteria for obtaining a charter vessel/headboat moratorium permit for the Gulf reef fish or Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fisheries. Written comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before March 27, 2003.

This proposed rule would:

- Remove the requirement to have had a valid permit on the effective date (July 29, 2002) of the final rule that implemented the original moratorium, thereby making the eligibility criterion less restrictive;
- Reopen the application process for obtaining Gulf charter vessel/headboat moratorium permits and extend the applicable deadlines;
- Extend the dates of valid or renewable open access permits for these fisheries;
- Clarify, as requested by the Gulf Council, a constraint on issuance of historical captain permits under the moratorium; and

- Extend the expiration date of the moratorium to account for the delay in implementation resulting from this proposed revision.

Comments on the proposed rule should be sent to Phil Steele, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. Comments may also be sent via fax to 727-570-5583. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet. Copies of the proposed rule and supporting documents are available from the same address or by calling 727-570-5305.

This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>. To obtain considerable recorded information about our missions, services, and management measures, call our toll free public service line at 1-866-570-5301. If the information you need is not available on that line, you can leave us a message and we'll get back to you within one business day. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.